

WHITEHORL LUPINE

Lupinus densiflorus Benth.
var. aureus (Kellogg) Munz
plant symbol = LUDEA

Contributed by: USDA NRCS Plant Materials Program

Uses

Erosion control: Whitewhorl lupine is useful for soil renovation and stabilization.

Beautification: This plant is an excellent ornamental for parks and homes.

Status

Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status (e.g. threatened or endangered species, state noxious status, and wetland indicator values).

Description

Lupinus densiflorus Benth. var. *aureus* (Kellogg) Munz, whitewhorl lupine, is an annual herb growing from 1-1/2 to 2-1/2 feet tall, with brilliant white to yellow flowers.

Adaptation and Distribution

Like other lupines, whitewhorl lupines are well-adapted to open, sunny locations, and will tolerate moderate amounts of water. Their symbiotic relationship with rhizobium, a root bacterium, enables them to fix nitrogen in the soil, enabling the plants to survive in nutrient-depleted or infertile soils, including alkaline clays and rocky outcrops.

Whitewhorl lupine is distributed throughout California. For a current distribution map, please consult the Plant Profile page for this species on the PLANTS Website.

Establishment

The herb provides abundant quantities of seed in conspicuous pods; these may be gathered when ripe, then shelled, dried, and stored until planting time. Most seeds will germinate without pretreatment, although germination will be enhanced by soaking the seeds in boiling hot water just before planting. Treat seeds prior to planting with the proper legume inoculant. Sow seed

by broadcasting in winter or early spring. Whitewhorl lupine is subject to mildew and root rot and requires good drainage, otherwise it is not particular about the soil. It grows best in cool locations and accepts moderate amounts of water during early growth, but not direct overhead sprinkling (semi-dry conditions are best). The plant can also be grown from basal cuttings which are taken and planted out in the spring.

Management

Remove faded flowers unless self-sown seedlings are desired; otherwise, little or no subsequent care should be required.

Pests and Potential Problems

There are no serious insect pests at the present time; however, the plant is subject to mildew and root rot.

Cultivars, Improved, and Selected Materials (and area of origin)

'Gedling' golden lupine is a cultivar with brilliant golden-yellow flowers. It was developed from a widespread California native spring wildflower, whose pale yellow flowers are not as showy as those of the 'Gedling' cultivar. Seeds are available at most commercial sources.

Prepared By & Species Coordinator:

USDA NRCS Plant Materials Program

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For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS <<http://plants.usda.gov>> and Plant Materials Program Web sites <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>.

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